

# 61 Mech Monthly

61 Mech Veterans Association

# 61 Meg Maandeliks

61 Meg Veterane Vereniging



## July 2024



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***61 Meg / Mech  
Veterane Vereniging  
Veterans Association  
Jaarlikse Gedenkdien  
Annual Memorial Service  
17 Augustus / August 2024  
Johannesburg / Wes Kaap***



Die jaarlikse 61 Meg Parade is 'n tyd vir herinnering, respek en nadenke. Hierdie jaar, 2024, sal dit sestiende jaar wees sedert die stigting van die 61 Mech Veterane Vereniging op 30 Augustus 2008. Die eerste Jaarlikse Gedenkparade en toekenningsdag het in 2011 plaasgevind. Die hoofdoel van hierdie geleentheid is om die spesiale militêre erfenis van die 61 Meg Bataljonggroep te bewaar en dit aan voormalige lede, militêre geskiedenis entoesiaste en die algemene publiek te bevorder.

Ons gesogte eenheid was die operasionele reserwe vir die gedugte vorige SAW en sy opvolger, die SANW vir 27 jaar. Ons het byna alle groot militêre operasies tydens die SWA / RSA en die Angola Bosoerlog deelgeneem. Die eenheid het 'n groot rol gespeel in die bou van die SAW en die SANW as een van die beste leërs wat die Afrika-kontinent nog ooit gesien!





**61 MECH VETERANS ASSOCIATION**

**GEDENKDIENS / MEMORIAL SERVICE**

(Ditsong Nasionale Museum vir Militêre Geskiedenis / Ditsong National Museum for Military History)

**17 Augustus / August 2024**

**PROGRAM / PROGRAMME**

- 07h30 Hys van vlae / Hoisting of flags  
61 Meg uitstalling oop vir besigtiging / 61 Mech display open to view
- 08h00 61 Mech Algemene Jaarvergadering - Ouditorium /  
61 Mech Annual General Meeting - Auditorium
- 09h00 Baniere vertoon / Banners displayed
- 09h45 Gaste neem hul sitplekke in / Guests to be seated
- 10h00 Veterane tree aan / Veterans form up
- Aankoms van Funkisionaris / Arrival of Functionary  
Genl Maj (Aft/Ret) Lawrence R. Smith, SM, MMM  
Generale saluut / General salute  
Boodskap / Message
- Veterane tree uit / Veterans fall out
- Gedenkdien / Memorial Service: Kpln / Chap Pieter Bezuidenhout
- Laaste Taptoe / Last Post  
Twee minute stilte / Two-minute silence  
Lui Hind-klok / Sound Hind bell  
Oggendsinjal / Reveille
- Klaaglied / Lament
- Krans en Kruis legging / Laying of Crosses and Wreaths
- Medalje parade en toekennings / Medal parade and presentations
- Sing van Volkslied / Singing of the National Anthem
- 12h00 Verversings / Refreshments

# 61 MEG PARADE 2024

## WELLINGTON WES-KAAP 17 AUGUSTUS 2024

61 Mech Veterane Vereniging / Veterans Association

### WES-KAAP GEDENKDIENS

17 Augustus @ 09:00 - 13:00

Soetendal Busch Camp, Soetendal Road, Wellington



61 Mech- en ander Veterane in die Wes-Kaap word uitgenooi na hierdie geleentheid wat parallel loop met die jaarlikse Gedenkdien by die Ditsong Museum vir Militêre Geskiedenis in Johannesburg.

‘n Registrasiefooi van R100 is betaalbaar. Dit sluit in:

Koffie / Tee / Beskuit, Boerewors Roll, aar-tappel en noedel slaai, ‘n Beker vir tee / koffie (met ‘n 61 sticker opgeplak).

‘n Kroeg sal beskikbaar wees (met kaart fasiliteite).

Glase met “branded” stickers op sal teen betaling van deposito beskikbaar wees (R20).

Braai pakke sal beskikbaar wees.

Ys sal beskikbaar wees.

Hout, braai-dromme en roosters sal beskikbaar wees vir die middagete en braai.

Dr. Wouter Basson, is ons hoof spreker. Hy was hoof van die voormalige SAW se geheime navorsings vleuel, en is vir jare vervolgt, geteister en gebrandmerk. Ten spyte daarvan, het hy homself nooit laat onderkry nie en is uiteindelik op alle klagtes vrygespreek. Hierdie uitsonderlike man en offisier, het alle pogings om hom in die tronk te gooi, te verneder, verban en te skors uit die mediese beroep, beveg en oorwin. Hy gaan ons bietjie vertel van stryd teen hierdie duistere magte die afgelope 20+ jare.

A.O. Jacques Dewet is ons Parade samma-joor. Hy is ‘n legendariese Pantser en 61 man en deesdae bekende storieverteller op Kyk-NET. Hy is ook die broer van Kol. (Agt) Johan Dewet wat ons parade bevelvoerder sal wees

RSVP: Gerard van Rooyen by +27 (083)  
3773451



# VERJAARDAG WENSE / BIRTHDAY WISHES



*Verjaarsdae vir die maand van Augustus volgens die informasie beskikbaar op die 61 Meg se databasis.*

Help asseblief om dit opgedateer te hou.

## *Die Vyftigers*

Renaud Booysen	1951-08-06
Wilhelm Andrew Allers	1956-08-13
Koos Pretorius	1958-08-05
Andre Retief	1958-08-23
George Jones Havenga	1958-08-26
Denis Coyne	1959-08-09

## *Die Sestigters*

Daniel Johannes Swanepoel	1960-08-12
Richard Abbott	1960-08-15
Wynand Van Tonder	1960-08-21
Koos Els	1960-08-23
Nico Vermaak	1961-08-17
Rian Lambert	1961-08-22
Kelvin Robin Luke	1961-08-29
Marius Steven Ackerman	1961-08-31
Bruce Morris	1962-08-18
J.J.P.C. Kosie Venter	1962-08-21
Tertius Bindeman	1962-08-25
Bryan Willoughby	1962-08-25
Andrew McFarland	1962-08-28
Philip Collins	1963-08-09
Chris Loots	1963-08-13
Johan Labuschagne	1963-08-16
Michael O'Connor	1963-08-24
Johan Jonker	1963-08-27
Diederick Johannes Reinecke	1964-08-03
David Johan Spangenberg	1964-08-06
Dirk Opperman	1964-08-12
Phillip Hermanus Oosthuizen	1964-08-27
Pieter Andries Swanepoel	1965-08-10
Glen Moore	1966-08-05
Donaldvan Til	1966-08-06
(Fana)SJJ Smit	1966-08-13
Paul Brummer	1966-08-20
Robert Torrani	1966-08-23
Gawie Booysen	1966-08-26
Johan Groenewald	1967-08-09
Wernerdu Preez	1967-08-13
Mark Smith	1967-08-21
Stephen van der Merwe	1967-08-23
Pieter Dyson	1967-08-29
Daniel Rudolf van Vuuren	1967-08-30
Glenn Webber	1968-08-06
Thomas Mc Donald	1968-08-07

Shane Gericke	1968-08-08
Dieter Prinsloo	1968-08-13
Jacques Booysen	1968-08-16
Andries Bester	1968-08-22
David Humphrey	1968-08-30
Nicolaas Barend Pretorius	1968-08-30
George Frederick Rautenbach	1968-08-30
Barry Groenewald	1969-08-03
Lance Van der Sandt	1969-08-15
Theo (P.M.) Bester	1969-08-28

## *Die Sewentigers*

Pierre Smit	1970-08-12
Derek Skolnic	1970-08-18
Louis Nel	1970-08-20
Casper Jan Hendrik Christie	1970-08-30
Johnny O'Neil	1972-08-03
Karel Moolman	1972-08-11
Craig Franck	1972-08-26
David Blewett	1975-08-26
George Sinclair	1977-08-12
Carina Burger	1979-08-16



## MEMBERSHIP OF THE 61 MECH VETERANS ASSOCIATION

You can join the 61 Mech Veterans Association as a 61 Mech Veteran (full membership) if you are a bona fide military veteran who served with Combat Group Juliet or 61 Mechanised Battalion Group or took part in operations or exercises with 61 Mech, regardless of gender, race or creed over the period 1978 to 31 December 2005. A full member has the right to vote for the election of office bearers at national and lower echelon levels. He/she has the right to attend all parades and functions of the association.

You can join the 61 Mech Veterans Association as a 61 Mech Supporter if you did not serve with Combat Group Juliet or 61 Mechanised Battalion Group, regardless of your state or country, as long as you subscribe to the aims and objectives of the association. This is also where friends, family and relatives of 61 Mech Supporters can join the association without having to be bona fide military veterans. Supporters of the association are entitled to attend all association parades, functions, and annual general meetings but do not have any rights to vote. They also get access to the 61 Mech member website to view the stories, photos and declassified military documents and may receive association correspondence.

If you want to join the 61 Mech Veterans Association for the first time click on this link, complete your details and make payment of your membership fees - <https://www.61mech.org.za/pages/subscribe>

### Subscribe

	61 Mech Supporter	61 Mech Veteran
Subscription Fee (per annum)	R300.00	R300.00
	<a href="#">Subscribe</a>	<a href="#">Subscribe</a>
Subscription Fee (10 year membership)	R2,000.00	R2,000.00
	<a href="#">Subscribe</a>	<a href="#">Subscribe</a>

# WAT HET IN JULIE GEBEUR? WHAT HAPPENED IN JULY?

*Club Omuthiya Skouerskuur  
4 Julie*



*Onthou om te Onthou*

## **1 AUGUSTUS 2024** **SKOUERSKUUR &** **ALGEMENE JAARVERGADERING**

ALMAL IS WELKOM OM BY TE WOON - 18:00  
SOP EN BROOD SAL VOORSIEN WORD NA DIE  
VERGADERING.

BRING EIE SOPBEKER EN KLEINBORDJIE SAAM.  
KLEREDRAG - NETJIES SOOS VIR BINNESHUIS

**\*\*LW DAAR GAAN GEEN BRAAI VURE WEES NIE\*\***





# ***Scotland Reunion 12 – 13 July***

**Evert de Vries**



***L to R: Derek Walker, Rolf Zanders (Zappa), Evert de Vries, Stuart Kohler (Gollum), Harry Liversage, Stephen Van Aardt, Mike Harper.***

Our 61 Mech Bn, B-Company of 1981 held a reunion 43 years after we were last all together in one place.

Six of the nine permanently UK-based members (which we know about) turned up. We were also blessed with one additional member who divides his time between Italy, South Africa, and regular stopovers in the UK, who also came along especially to join us. Four members' wives joined us too, which added a good touch of class.

We started by gathering on Stephen van Aardts' sheep farm in Scotland on Friday afternoon the 12th of July and got to know each other again. Ice broken, we moved on to a enjoy a sit-down meal in a good restaurant near Aberlour.

On Saturday morning some of us enjoyed a trip out to a local distillery; since we were in the centre of the Scottish whisky districts, why not indeed? Saturday afternoon saw us all back together again. Stephen van Aardt who incurred no travel and lodging costs, had pledged to feed us all for the Saturday and Sunday and provided a magnificent spread. Let the "braai-ing" commence! There was plenty of good quality meat, from venison roll to pork and lamb chops, beefsteak, chicken breasts and drumsticks by the bucketful and of course boerewors with two types available: 2 rounds of medium and my own additional contribution, 4 rounds of chilli and garlic boerewors which turned out to be very popular indeed. "Pap en sous" and various salad and other dishes were available too.



Since we were only a few days past the anniversary of the mortar bombing incident of July 1981 during which Lionel van Rooyen lost his life and 15 others were injured - some with life changing injuries, we took time to discuss, reflect and remember.

As you can see from the photo's there was plenty for all - enough for Saturday Dinner, Sunday dinner, and even some left over for our hosts to send us packing with a travel pack of "pad-kos" on Monday morning. Stephen and his lovely (and very busy) wife treated us all to a full English for Breakfast on Sunday morning and for those of us still there, another breakfast before we set off home again on Monday.

As for atmosphere - it was as if the jokes and ribbing continued exactly from where it left off 43 years ago. A fabulously memorable and repeatable weekend. Next time we hope those of our year and company that missed the event will be able to attend too and perhaps we might even see a South African contingent too. Something we had quietly hoped for but did not achieve.



*Rolf (Zappa) still loves Mike!*



*Derek Walker - finally without bush hat,  
Rolf Zanders, Evert de Vries, Mike Harper.*



*Stuart Kohler (Gollum)  
and Harry Liversage*



# ***61 Mech Maintenance Day at the Ditsong Museum***

***Maintenance Day Saturday 20 July from 09:00 to 12:00 at DITSONG: National Museum of Military History. We helped in cleaning exhibits in the gun park, aircrafts, tanks and armoured vehicles.***

## **The 61 Mech Museum**

The aim of the 61 Mech museum is to become a nationally and internationally recognised battalion group museum, managed within accepted museology principles to:

1. Preserve the heritage and history of 61 Mech Battalion in terms of equipment and weapons; unit events in terms of a documentation and photographic archives and displays; all other collectable items not originally intended to last for more than a short time such as tickets, posters, postcards or labels.
2. Provide an education service to members of the SANDF and the public at large with regard to the history.
3. Provide an information service to the SANDF, interests group, the public of the greater Johannesburg and visitors in general about 61 Mech Battalion, its traditions, its history, its equipment and its subunits/combat teams.



***Steve  
van der Merwe***



# Munga Equipe - 20 Julie

*61 Mech se fietsryspan ry saam 115 km gruispad in 'n 5 man span*





**ALOE/WHITE ENSIGN SHELLHOLE DELLVILLE WOOD:  
REMEMBRANCE PARADE, 21 JULY 2024**



*25 July  
61 Veterans supporting the  
Rhodesian Light Infantry  
monthly get together at the  
Moths Sunset Shellhole.*





## *61 MVV Skouerskuur The Maritime Club PE - 27 Julie*





## PRESERVING OUR MILITARY ARTIFACTS

*Preserving our military artifacts is crucial in honoring the sacrifices and the legacy of those who have served in the SADF. These artifacts hold historical significance and provide a tangible connection to past events, allowing us to better understand and appreciate the sacrifices made by our military members. By preserving these artifacts, we are able to ensure that future generations have access to the stories and experiences of our veterans, allowing them to learn from the past and appreciate the freedoms they enjoy today.*

*Furthermore, military artifacts serve as valuable tools for education and historical research. They provide insights into the technological advancements of the past. By studying these artifacts, historians and researchers are able to piece together the events of the past and gain a better understanding. Preserving these artifacts is essential in order to continue advancing our knowledge and understanding of military history.*

*In addition, military artifacts also serve as symbols of national pride and unity. They serve as a reminder of the bravery and sacrifice of our military members, and can instill a sense of patriotism and gratitude in the hearts of those who view them. By preserving these artifacts, we are able to honor the memory of those who have served and sacrificed for our country, and ensure that their contributions are never forgotten. Overall, the preservation of military artifacts is essential in honoring our past, educating future generations, and fostering a sense of patriotism and unity among South Africans.*





## THE CREATION OF THE ASSEGAAI, DAPHNE CLASS SUBMARINE, ONLAND MUSEUM

*Andrew Whitaker*

*I had the privilege of interviewing Ret Admiral Arne Soderlund last August as part of a process to assist the Naval Heritage Trust raise sufficient funds to move the Assegaai onto land, where it will become a museum. It is the last remaining Daphne class sub that our navy owned. As an aside, Arne Soderlund has the most amazing private museum and if you ever find yourself in the Simonstown area it is a must visit.*

*The Assegaai was previously known as the Johanna van der Merwe and it was finally moved to land on 20 July 2024. The sheer size, 700 tonnes and 58m long made this move an enormous task. In Arne's words "Soderlund acknowledged that moving the 58 metre long, 700 ton submarine could not have been achieved "without the wholehearted and enthusiastic commitment of the SA Navy and Armscor Dockyard (Simon's Town), supported by our sponsors, including Damen Shipyards Cape Town, the Mayor's Office and Vanguard Heavylift."*

### **SAS Assegaai: Home at Last**

The SAS Assegaai, an iconic vessel in South African naval history, has finally been relocated to its permanent home. Rear Admiral (JG) Arne Soderlund (Rtd) of the Naval Heritage Trust shared his joy, stating:

*"It is with the greatest pleasure that we can advise you that Assegaai is finally home and safe in her new museum precinct and visible to the public, albeit in need of some make-up."*

On July 20th, the submarine reached its final resting place at the Naval Museum in Simon's Town, following a challenging 350-meter overland journey that included a tight 90-degree turn.

After 21 years of dedicated fundraising efforts, the dream of preserving the Assegaai has been realized. The move, initially set for July 6, 2024, encountered delays as the lifting struc-

ture required additional strengthening. Workers from Armscor Dockyard labored tirelessly to fabricate and fit the necessary beams and plates.

The relocation began on the morning of July 19th. As Soderlund explained, the complex maneuver required relocating containers, lambda walls, and even a lamp post. Despite intermittent rain, the submarine was correctly positioned by late Friday afternoon. The final hurdles were cleared with precision, with the sonar dome passing over foundations with minimal clearance.

On Saturday morning, the submarine was finally placed in its new location. The rest of the morning was spent lifting tar and breaking concrete to lower the submarine onto the foundations without damaging the sonar dome. By lunchtime, SAS Assegaai was secure in her final position.



### *‘n Paar gedagtes oor die pad vorentoe*

Die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging is gestig deur en vir die soldate wat by Veggroep Juliet/Battle Group Juliet en 61 Meg Bataljon gedien het.

Die RMVO/CMVO het die proses by die owerhede gefasiliteer om die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging as amptelike militêre veterane Vereniging erken te kry.

Bo en behalwe die lidmaatskap vir bona fide militêre veterane wat by Veggroep Juliet en 61 Meg Bataljon gedien het, maak die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging ook voorsiening vir 61 Meg Ondersteuners, erelede en korporatiewe lede.

Die ongemaklike realiteit wat ons in die oë moet kyk is dat die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging se voortbestaan as militêre veteranevereniging daarom direk gekoppel is aan die lewensverwagting van die bona fide militêre veterane wat by Veggroep Juliet en 61 Meg Bataljon gedien het, want dit is ‘n militêre veteranevereniging spesifiek vir die soldate wat daar gedien het.

Dit is die verskil tussen die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging en ‘n vereniging soos die Suid Afrikaanse Infanterievereniging, wat nie gekoppel is aan ‘n spesifieke eenheid nie, maar aan ‘n formasie soos die infanterie waar die spesifieke

eenhede nie die lidmaatskap bepaal nie, maar die vakindeling van infanterie.

As die laaste 61 Meg Veteraan, wat ‘n ingeskrewe lid is van die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging, afgesterf het, is daar nie meer bona fide militêre veterane oor wat by Veggroep Juliet en 61 Meg Bataljon gedien het nie. Sal die owerhede die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging dan nog steeds as ‘n militêre veterane Vereniging kan beskou slegs op grond van die 61 Meg Ondersteuners, erelede en korporatiewe lede?

Die gedagte om die jongmense onder die vaandel van “Born of 61” te betrek as 61 Meg Ondersteuners is ‘n baie belangrike inisiatief om bewusmaking te skep by en betrokkeheid van die jeug te bewerkstellig. Louis Buys het ‘n passie vir jongmense en het ingestem om ons te help om die “Born of 61” behoorlik te struktueer met ‘n missie en ‘n visie.

Dit is belangrik dat ons terwyl ons nog hier is, ons voluit moet gaan om die visie en missie van die 61 Meg Veteranevereniging, waar nodig aan te pas, toe te pas en uit te leef.



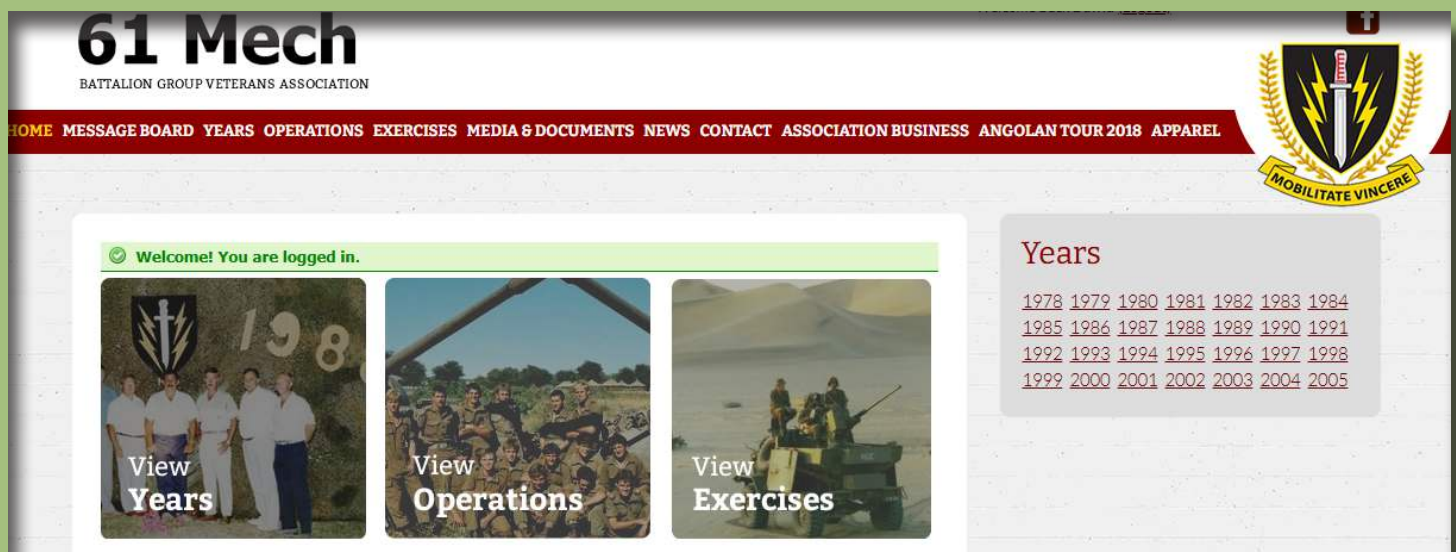
# The New 61 Mech Website in Progress

The current website was probably the very first project which the 61 Mech Veterans Association undertook, and it dates back to 2008. This website is long due for an overhaul. The AGM in 2022 resolved to upgrade the website, and despite a few late challenges with regard to the specs and functions, it may well be possible for the new website to see the light by 17 August.

The website is essential to the management of our membership database, as most of our members subscribe and renew their membership on the website. This function is also closely linked to the management of the finances of the association., as will be the new electronic shop integrated to the website. We have now opened an account for each registered member on the Sage accounting software. This means that you will from now on receive a receipt when you pay or renew your subscription, and when it ex-

pired, we will be able to send you an invoice to remind you to renew your subscription.

There will be many more functions added to the new website which will enhance your experience, but that you will be able to see for yourself once it is up and running. The developer has a deadline of 30 days to deliver the new website, and he is confident that he will be able to deliver as promised.



## DIE LAASTE GENERASIE

Waarom is dit belangrik om jou oorlogs ervarings te deel?

Die antwoord is voor die hand liggend. Want ons is die laaste generasie wat eersterangs daaroor kan en gaan skryf of dig. Reeds toe die Bosoorlog gevoer was, het dit bekend gestaan as 'n "Klein Oorlog". Dit is waar, gemeet teen Wereldstandaarde!! Maar hierdie sogenaamde klein oorlog het die verhaal van 'n sub-kontinent vir altyd verander, en 'n impak gehad op op Wêreld politiek - Hou klein of hoe groot ookal. En dan kan ek maar net sê soos Erich Maria Remarque, All Quiet on the Western Front.

Geen boek oor die Bosoorlog is bedoel as 'n bekentenis of 'n beskuldiging na enige kant toe nie. En verseker was dit nie 'n avontuur nie. Want dood is nie avontuur wanneer dit jou op ouderdom 18 jaar in die gesig staar nie. Want dan wil jy net leef!!! Bosoorlog skrywes en gedigte vertel suiwer van 'n generasie wat geveg het vir 'n saak waaraan hulle geglo het. En soos Remarque tereg opmerk, al het hulle lewendig teruggekeer, was dit met letsels aan die siel.

*"This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped shells, were destroyed by the war." Erich Maria Remarque*

## BELANGRIK

**61 Meg Veterane en Vriende**

**Die EXCO wil u graag opgedateer hou oor ons aktiwiteite**

**Stel ons in staat om dit te kan doen**

**STUUR DIE VOLGENDE INLIGTING AAN:  
MEMBERSHIP@61MECH.ORG.ZA**

**Naam**

**Kontaknommer**

**Dorp woonagtig**

**Datums in 61 Meg gedien**

**E-Pos adres**

## ***Recovery after Storms of Life***

***Jannie Niewoudt***

***61 MVV se Uitvoerende groep het besluit om meer te belê in ons lede (die absolute heel belangrikste komponent van ons Vereniging) Ons gaan met julle hulp voorlopig 6 lede in strategiese Provinsies identifiseer om geskool te word as Veldwerkers wat ondersteun gaan word deur professionele Beraders, om die wel en wee van ons lede te bestuur en 'n oor op die grond vir lede te wees. Dit behels o.a. opleiding in een tot een en groepsessies om enige verlies wat ons lede mag ervaar, trauma of wat ookal, te kan bestuur. 61 gaan dit ten volle finansier en die nodige ondersteuning bied. Die volgende streke is geïdentifiseer: Gauteng, KZN, Vrystaat, Ooskaap, Suidkaap, Weskaap. Laat weet indien u sou wou betrokke raak op so 'n wyse en sodoende terugploeg vir u Makkers en Medemens.***





There will always be storms of life.

It may be physical storms, relational storms, internal and emotional storms or financial storms. Even right now, you are either coming out of a storm, in the middle of a storm or about to go into a storm.

Let's be honest with ourselves.

Life is not easy and storms are part of life in this broken world we are living in.

We are not in control of a storm, but in control of our reactions to a storm and we will react to a storm the way we are trained through our experiences of life.

Therefore, I want to challenge you to investigate your ability to handle a storm and your preparedness to face a new storm.

If you are coming out of a devastating storm, such as an unexpected retrenchment, divorce, death of a loved one, traumatic event or being diagnosed with cancer, we want to invite you to join our recovery after storms of life self-examination process.

This process consists of six online workshops that focus on general recovery and personal growth after experiencing any storm of life or trauma.

The workshops are designed to ensure the recovery of the physical, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and social aspects of your life.

This six week process consists of the following, access to six consecutive online workshops and a workbook on an internet platform. Six consecutive online group discussions once a week after each workshop. Access to printable self-examination assignments or other resources.

Don't miss this opportunity to find out how you react to storms and what you can do to better handle storms in the future.

You are welcome to contact us if you want to know more about the storms of life self-investigation process.

Contact Elize Schoeman at 083 234 9808 or [elize@elehos.co.za](mailto:elize@elehos.co.za)





# ***RECOVERY AFTER STORMS OF LIFE***

This online self-investigation process starts on 6 Aug and ends on 10 Sep. It is not a quick fix self-help program but a journey of recovery and self-enrichment in a safe space of group support.

## **THE PROCESS CONSISTS OF:**

- Self investigation work on your own.
- Access to presentations on an online internet platform.
- PDF presentations of self-investigation homework.
- Zoom group discussions.

## **ONLINE GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

We will have a Zoom group discussion after each workshop once a week on Tuesday Evenings from 18h30 to a 20h30 on the following dates:

- 6 Aug: Introduction to explain the process and deal with relevant questions.
- 13 Aug: Facing Reality.
- 20 Aug: Processing your losses.
- 27 Aug: Understanding and Processing your Emotions.
- 3 Sep: Forgiveness.
- 10 Sep: Shaping your life according to God's plan.

## **COST AND REGISTRATION**

We have a special price of R300 until the end of 2024.

Contact Elize Schoeman at 083 234 9808 or [elize@elehos.co.za](mailto:elize@elehos.co.za)



# War veterans and late onset trauma

## Introduction

*War veterans face unique challenges upon returning from combat, including the potential for late onset trauma. This phenomenon, also known as delayed onset post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), occurs when symptoms of PTSD manifest months or even years after the traumatic event. While the exact cause of late onset trauma remains unclear, it is believed to be triggered by various factors such as stress, loss, or triggering events that remind the individual of their traumatic experiences. Understanding the complexities of late onset trauma is essential in providing effective treatment and support for war veterans as they navigate their post-combat lives. By recognizing the signs and symptoms of delayed onset PTSD, healthcare professionals can offer early intervention and holistic care to help veterans cope with their trauma and improve their overall well-being. Addressing this issue is crucial in honoring the sacrifices and service of our veterans and ensuring they receive the care and support they deserve.*

NOTE: This article is based on general research since no reliable data or statistics could be found about the phenomena in South African Bush War Veterans.

## ***Background information on war veterans and trauma***

War veterans often experience trauma due to the intense and prolonged exposure to violence, loss, and fear during their military service. The psychological impact of war can manifest in various ways, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. Approximately 30% of Vietnam veterans, 12% of Gulf War veterans, and 11-20% of veterans from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom have been diagnosed with PTSD.

It is important to note that trauma symptoms may not appear immediately after the traumatic event, but *may surface years or even decades later. This phenomenon, known as late-onset PTSD, can be triggered by a variety of factors such as retirement, loss of social support, or exposure to additional stressors* (Institute of Medicine et al.).

## ***Stating the thesis focusing on late onset trauma in war veterans***

The prevalence and impact of late onset trauma in war veterans, particularly aging Vietnam veterans, is a complex and significant phenomenon that warrants deep exploration. The abstracts from the cited studies shed light on the emergence of trauma-related memories in later adulthood among veterans, highlighting the varying prevalence rates of trauma reengagement. The findings suggest a correlation between combat exposure, PTSD, and late onset trauma, with PTSD symptoms playing a crucial role in this dynamic.



Furthermore, the insights provided on cognitive screening tools such as the Telephone Interview for Cognitive Status (TICS) offer a nuanced perspective on assessing cognitive function in aging military cohorts, including those with traumatic brain injury (TBI) and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). By unravelling the complexities of late onset trauma in war veterans and the associated cognitive implications, a holistic understanding of the multifaceted experiences and challenges faced by these veterans can be achieved, paving the way for more targeted interventions and support strategies.

### ***Factors contributing to late onset trauma in war veterans***

In understanding the complex phenomenon of late onset trauma in war veterans, various factors play crucial roles in influencing the emergence and severity of traumatic experiences later in life. The prevalence of Abstract Later Adulthood Trauma Reengagement (LATR), as explored in (Janet Wilmoth, p. 49-50), sheds light on the diverse manifestations of trauma-related memories among aging veterans.

The study's comparison across multiple samples of Vietnam veterans reveals varying levels of LATR, with correlations to combat exposure and PTSD symptoms emphasizing the interconnectedness of these factors in contributing to late-onset trauma. Moreover, (Olivera Marković-Savić) delves into the societal implications of war veterans marginalization, high-

lighting how insufficient compensation and discrimination within the veteran community can exacerbate the development of late-onset trauma. By considering the multifaceted dynamics of combat exposure, PTSD, and societal support, a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to late onset trauma in war veterans can be attained, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions and holistic approaches to address their mental health needs.

### ***Extended exposure to combat situations***

Furthermore, extended exposure to combat situations has been linked to various long-term psychological effects on war veterans. Studies have shown that prolonged exposure to high levels of stress and trauma can lead to the development of conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. These conditions can often manifest years after the individual has returned from combat, leading to what is commonly referred to as late onset trauma. The symptoms of late onset trauma can be debilitating, affecting not only the veterans mental health but also their overall quality of life. In some cases, these psychological issues can even result in substance abuse or suicidal ideation. It is crucial for healthcare providers and support systems to be aware of the potential for late onset trauma in war veterans and to provide appropriate interventions to help mitigate the long-term effects of extended exposure to combat situations.

### ***Deficiency in mental health support after deployment***

The post-deployment phase for military veterans often reveals a concerning deficiency in mental health support, exacerbating the repercussions of their service. Research by (Daniel Bressington et al., p. 416-424) highlights the prevalence of complex post-traumatic stress disorder among Australian Defence Force veterans, underscoring the critical need for tailored interventions specific to this condition. Furthermore, the burden extends to spouses of veterans, as elucidated in (Nadine Goeree et al.), who navigate the psychosocial effects of deployment-related health issues with-





in the family unit. These studies underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by veterans and their families post-deployment. The data suggest that existing mental health support systems may not adequately address the profound impacts of military service on mental well-being, necessitating a comprehensive reassessment and enhancement of post-deployment mental health services to better cater to the unique needs of veterans and their families.

### ***Impact of late onset trauma on war veterans***

Late-onset trauma can have a profound impact on war veterans, particularly those from conflicts like the Vietnam War. The emergence of trauma-related memories in later life, as outlined in the concept of Later-Adulthood Trauma Reengagement (LATR), can be influenced by various aging-related challenges such as retirement, physical decline, and bereavement (Janet Wilmoth, p. 49-50). Studies have shown variability in the prevalence of LATR among different veteran populations, ranging from 5% to 38%, with higher levels observed in combat veterans and American Legion members compared to repatriated prisoners of war and female veterans (Janet Wilmoth, p. 49-50). The correlation between LATR and combat exposure as well as PTSD symptoms underscores the complex interplay between past experiences and current psychological well-being (Janet Wilmoth, p. 49-50). Moreover, historical perspectives on trauma, such as the Victorian eras interpretation of shock in contexts like railway accidents and warfare, reveal evolving understandings of trauma and the challenges in diagnosing and addressing psychological wounds. This highlights the need for comprehensive support systems and interventions tailored to the unique needs of aging war veterans grappling with late-onset trauma.

### ***Challenges in relationships and social isolation***

In examining the challenges faced by war veterans, particularly in the context of relationships and social isolation, it becomes evident that the consequences of trauma extend beyond individual experiences to impact interperso-

nal connections. Research highlighted in (McKenna K. Minarcin) demonstrates how survivors of trauma often exhibit asocial behavior due to impaired reward processing, leading to a tendency to avoid risky social interactions. This avoidance can result in strained personal relationships, as individuals with PTSD may struggle to engage in rewarding social interactions. Moreover, as outlined in (G. Kurt Piehler, p. 89-91), factors such as PTSD, depression, substance abuse, and isolation contribute to the complexity of social challenges faced by veterans, ultimately affecting their ability to form and maintain meaningful connections. The interplay between traumatic experiences and social isolation underscores the importance of holistic support systems and interventions to address the multifaceted needs of war veterans as they navigate relationships post-deployment.

### ***Physical health consequences and ways of coping***

Research indicates that war veterans experiencing late-onset trauma may face significant physical health consequences as a result of their traumatic experiences (Mykhailo Pustovoyt et al.). These consequences can manifest in various ways, including increased risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and comorbid psychiatric disorders. It is crucial to consider effective treatment options that can address the complex needs of these individuals. In exploring ways of coping with such challenges, a comprehensive approach involving the use of atypical antipsychotic medications



like aripiprazole alongside trauma-focused psychotherapy emerges as a promising strategy (Mykhailo Pustovoyt et al.). By integrating pharmacological interventions with psychological therapies, individuals can potentially achieve improved outcomes in managing their PTSD symptoms and enhancing overall functioning. Additionally, the inclusion of personal narratives and case studies in trauma survivorship research can humanize the understanding of trauma responses, shedding light on both positive and negative coping mechanisms utilized by survivors. These narratives offer valuable insights into individual experiences and underscore the importance of not losing sight of the human aspect when studying trauma.

### **Dealing with late onset trauma in war veterans**

In addressing late onset trauma in war veterans, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of fostering a supportive and understanding environment. Veterans should be encouraged to seek professional help and not be stigmatized for experiencing mental health challenges. Furthermore, it is essential to provide veterans with access to specialized trauma-focused therapy, such as cognitive behavioral therapy or eye movement desensitization and reprocessing.

These therapeutic interventions have been shown to be effective in treating trauma-related symptoms and helping veterans process their experiences. Additionally, creating peer support groups where veterans can connect with others who have had similar experiences can be beneficial in reducing feelings of isolation and promoting a sense of community. By implementing these suggestions, we can better support war veterans in dealing with late onset trauma and promote their overall well-being and recovery.

## **Conclusion**

The findings presented in the research studies (Akhanemhe et al.) and (Hart et al.) shed light on the complex interplay between past combat exposure, posttraumatic stress symptoms, and overall cognitive and mental health outcomes in war veterans. While past combat exposure was linked to posttraumatic stress symptoms in both World War II and Korean War veterans, it was the additional factors of perceived stress and social support that significantly influenced the severity of these symptoms. *The impact of mental and physical health risk factors on cognitive decline, such as depression, obesity, and traumatic brain injury, underscores the long-term effects of military service on veterans well being.* Moreover, the examination of health-related quality of life highlights the importance of addressing not only the psychological aspects of trauma but also the broader implications on veterans daily functioning and overall satisfaction. *These conclusions underline the necessity of tailored support and interventions for veterans to navigate the challenges of late-onset trauma and its multifaceted repercussions.*





## *Brief van Dr George Scharf aan Dawid Lotter Maart 2013*

Hallo Dawid,

Jy het dalk vergeet maar ek was deel van die chirurgiese span tydens Op Modulêr. Jy was deel van 61 en bevelvoerder van Bravo kompanie. Ons was die eerste chirurgiese span in wêreld geskiedenis wat voor die BAG en afmarspunte ontplooi het!

Almal van ons het maar ons baggage. Ek dink al oplossing is om daaroor te praat, ek verveel almal met “positiewe war stories”. Ons moet glo dat ons ‘n doel gehad het en ons het almal daarin geslaag. Die huidige propaganda van die ANC beeld ons baie negatief uit, maar hulle weet ons was goed. As die gedagtes egter baie destruktief word moet ons maar hulp kry. Ek het geweldig baie aggresief geword agv opgehoopde stress en mense begin moer bv in parkeer terrein nadat ek ‘n ou ‘n ligte stampie met die kar gegee het. Ens Ens.

Ek het ‘n sielkundige gaan sien en hy het my ‘n paar tricks geleer om maar stil aan te gaan. Ek self is van plan om my loopbaan in ‘n boek te beskryf. Ek kan baie getuig oor oorlogswonde. Beide my oupa’s was in WWI. Een aan die geallieerde en een aan die Duitse kant. Albei het as onderoffisiere die hoogste dekorasie gekry naamlik “Military Medal with oak leaves” en die ander die Ysterkruis eerste klas. Albei was eintlik kavalarieste maar moes vier jaar in die loopgrawe rondkruip. My Duitse oupa was verwond. Hy het mosterd gas gesluk. Sowat 90 persent van sy 56ste Keiserlike Infanterie Regiment het gesneuwel! Beide oupas het alkoholiste geword EN NOOIT OOI WEER OOR DIE OORLOG GEPRAAT NIE. Een aand in die kroeg het ‘n ou my Duitse oupa gekonfronteer dat die oorlog nooit so sleg was nie – my oupa het hom dood geslaan. My eie pa was as Duitser krygsgevangene geneem en ge-interneer omdat hy met sy blou oë en 6 voet 4 duim lengte te Aries gelyk het in die Hitler Jugend. So, dit was maar die noodlot van tal-le generasies voor ons.

Aan die anderkant, die feit dat ons in 10 dae 14 skraps gehad het tydens Op Modulêr was ons meer blootgestel aan oorlog as die gemiddelde soldaat in WWII. Tog met oor die 8 000 ongevalle by die vyand en skaars 35 by ons en 440 Unitas met afwesige lugoormag het ons deksels goed gedoen!!! Rede om bleddie trots te wees. Een dag het ons ‘n taktiese terugtrekking gedoen en net toe ons in ‘n tydelike laer was het ‘n bom van ‘n eensame Mig so 800 m wes van ons ontplof, net toe julle as agterhoede by ons aansluit. Jy sal onthou dat die dokters radiostilte gebreek het deur te vra waar die een en ander was. Die een ou het gesê, “ons is so 800 m direk oos van waar daai bom sopas ontplof het”. Ons het onmiddellik weer gatskoon gemaak en die Migs het ons ou posisie kom bom. Ons het daai dokter terribly uitgekak en hom amper gebliksem toe hy kamma sê “hulle verstaan nie Afrikaans nie” en ek hom herinner enige Duitser sal 800m Oos verstaan. Ens Ens.



## *Afsien*

*Op die platvorm van Bloemfontein se stasie  
barstens vol tot uit sy nate  
met army balsak en allerlei bagasie  
staan aangetree - ons, massas jong soldate*

*Eenkant op die stasiebank het die ou man  
met diepere begrip  
in sy starre byna blinde blik  
vooroorgebuig - my oog gevang*

*En woordeloos sy boodskap aan my oorgedra  
“ons het nog nooit persoonlik kon ontmoet  
maar hierdie taak het ek aan myself opgedra  
om jou hier op die stasie te kom groet”*

*“Want ek - is jy - dekades terug  
op ander stasie en ander plek  
met onsekere bravade op my gesig  
het ek ook na die oorlogsfront vertrek”*

*“Ek lees jou en ken die gedagtes wat jou knel  
wat jy sonder woorde met my deel  
jong stryder, gegroet dit gaan jou wel  
in jou stryd geweef in oorlogs tafereel”*

*© Dawid Lotter.*



## ***First Battle Tanks at 61 Mech***

*In early 1976, tanks were briefly deployed at Oshakati during Operation Savannah but were not fully prepared for combat due to issues with the diesel engine. After Savannah, a new project called Olifant was launched to upgrade old Centurion tanks. The Olifant tanks were improved with upgraded suspension, new diesel engines, better power-to-weight ratio, enhanced transmissions, increased operating range, and improved ability to cross ditches. The original gun was replaced with a NATO-standard barrel, new sights and fire-control system were added, ammunition capacity increased, communication system improved, maintenance made easier, and tracks sturdier. The Olifant tanks were now ready to face potential tank battles with FAPLA's tanks.*

*Extracs from Dion Rossouw's Diary  
Photo's mostly for demonstration purpose  
Recognition to a variety of sources.*

### ***Mobilization***

During the second half of January 1994 a squadron of the new Olifant Mark 1 main battle tanks were sent to 61 Mech. They became Echo Squadron under Major Chris du Toit, with André Retief as his second in command. It was a historic moment, because so far no operational South African battle tanks had served on the border.



### **Dion Rossouw**

“In early January 1984, just after the Christmas break, we were told to mobilise a tank squadron to join 61 Mechanised Battalion Group in response to a potential Angolan armour threat. Most of us were left scratching our heads and wondering, ‘Where on earth is that?’ But we knew we would soon find out.” The deployment required more technicians than the School of Armour’s LWT) could spare, so they had to call in reinforcements from the Technical Services Corps Training Centre in Pretoria. Sergeant-Major Koos Miller and his team swooped in at the last minute, bringing with them two 8x8 MAN cargo trucks that were straight out of Germany, complete with their original colors and inscriptions. The tankers were definitely impressed.

For Dion Rossouw, this deployment was a whole new ball game. Despite his six years of service, including four in the Permanent Force, he had never been on an operational mission before. It was like the old saying, “Join the Army and see the world” - well, now he was finally getting his chance to see South West Africa”. And he wasn’t alone; the tank crews from the June 1983 intake were also gearing up for their first “world tour” to Omuthiya, where they would finish up their training on the fly.

It was a whirlwind of excitement and nerves, but everyone was ready to take on this new challenge. The stage was set for an adventure unlike any other, and Rossouw and his fellow soldiers were more than ready to dive in headfirst.

### *Underway*

#### **Day 1**

The sight was truly something to behold. Tanks and their crews leading the way on their massive Mack transporters, followed by a line of echelon vehicles in a slow but dignified procession. The convoy stretched an impressive 12km from front to back, with vehicles strategically spaced 400 meters apart to avoid causing chaos for passing civilians.

Whether this spacing actually helped is up for debate, as the clear Orange Free State air likely filled with colorful language from frustrated travelers. Rossouw, in particular, had a less than pleasant journey thanks to the bumpy ride in the old and jumpy Mack trucks.

Overall, it was a spectacle to witness, but behind the scenes, it was a different story. The convoy may have looked impressive, but the reality was far from idyllic thanks to “the old and horribly jumping Mack trucks.”

The convoy made its way through Kimberley, Griekwastad, and Barkley West before settling down for the night in the bustling market square of Groblershoop. To their surprise, a generous local gifted them with two lambs for a delicious braai, a much-needed treat after the tiffies had toiled away replacing numerous transporters’ tires.

With the tires changed and the braai enjoyed, the tiffies and a few of the leaders snuck off to the local hotel pub to “boost the local economy,” as Rossouw so eloquently puts it. They returned with a new set of garden furniture, courtesy of the hotel’s beer garden.

As dawn broke, the tank squadron hit the road once more, some of the crew nursing healthy hangovers and all the delightful symptoms that come with it. Ah, the joys of life on the road!

#### **Day 2**

The following day, they crossed the Orange River and finally set foot on SWA/Namibian soil at Ariamsvlei. Rossouw, eager for his first-ever trip into a foreign country, was quite disappointed to see only a much-rusted signboard in the desert welcoming him to “South West Africa.” They arrived at the unimpressive stopover of Grünau in the extreme south, which Rossouw accurately described as a “one-horse town” consisting of little more than a small hotel, a garage, and a few houses.

Despite the lackluster surroundings, the Grünau Hotel welcomed them with open arms. The proprietor generously opened a couple of rooms for much-needed showers for the tank men, who showed their gratitude by invading the pub for ice-cold beers. It was at this moment that Rossouw truly realized he was no longer in South Africa when he saw a girl who appeared to be about 12 years old running the bar counter.

In a town where the only excitement seemed to be the occasional gust of wind blowing by, the tank men found solace in the hospitality of the Grünau Hotel. Who knew that a rusty signboard in the desert could lead to such unexpected adventures?

#### **Day 3 and 4**

We arrived at the Hardap Dam just north of Marienthal. The heat was unbearable, with temperatures soaring to a scorching 45 degrees or more. The tank transporters even lifted the tarmac when making sharp turns - that’s how hot





it was!

They had to wait at the only butcher shop in Marienthal for the siesta to end so they could stock up on fresh meat before heading to the Hardap Dam resort. Once they arrived, they were greeted by the intense heat that felt like something out of “War of the Worlds.”

As the day started to cool down, some of them ventured into Marienthal in one of the Samil trucks for a delicious restaurant meal. Others opted to cool off by swimming from the camping site to the restaurant. It was an adventure-filled day despite the scorching heat, and we were all excited for what the rest of their journey had in store.

The night offered no respite. As soon as the lights went out, they they were besieged by swarms of insects, including the infamous “piss moths” that plagued Omuthiya. Rossouw is convinced that Marienthal in the summer is a true depiction of Hell as described in the Bible. The relentless onslaught of bugs made for a night of torment and chaos.

### Day 5

The team embarked on a thrilling 400km journey that led them past Windhoek, where they were escorted by military police along the bypass. Their destination was a tiny spot on the map called Sukses, which turned out to be completely devoid of any signs of civilization despite its promising name. After a humble ratpack dinner, they sought shelter in and under their vehicles for the night. The next morning, they fueled up on more ratpacks before hitting the road once again. Rossouw speculated that perhaps the Sukses adventure was a clever tactic by the command group to help them acclimate to the unfamiliar environment that awaited them.

### Day 6

Day 6 of their journey was a refreshing change of scenery, as they traveled through lush green

mountains, a stark contrast to the dry south. Passing through Otjiwarongo and Tsumeb, they finally arrived at the Oshivello training area after covering 120km. The excitement was palpable as they entered the so-called operational area.

As they continued on, they were greeted by the sight of massive elephants on the left side of the road, adding to the thrill of the adventure. Turning onto 61 Mech’s dirt road, they were met with a display of daggers and flashes, a clear indication that they were in for an unforgettable experience. Finally, they parked on the parade ground, where they were warmly welcomed by Commandant Epp Van Lill and the RSM, WO1 H G Smit.

### *Arrival*

### Day 7

The next morning, the tanks were unloaded and three of them were sent back to Oshivello for a demonstration to the 61 Mech troops. Brigadier Wouter Lombard welcomed the new arrivals and gave them a taste of things to come by having the troops lie down in a defensive position. Suddenly, the tanks burst through the bush towards the troops to give them a morale boost after their previous experiences with Angolan tanks during Operation Askari.

When the Olifants arrived in Omuthiya, some captured T-54 tanks were temporarily integrated into Echo Squadron. The crew of these tanks, known as the “Moscow Maniacs”, had a superi-



ority complex despite the Olifant tanks outperforming the T-54s. Echo Squadron trained in the bush for four days a week, with one soldier finding it relaxing compared to the usual unit routines.

The squadron had some leisure time on Saturdays where they would go to Tsumeb for shopping and then enjoy steaks and beer at a hotel. After some field training, they went on a full-scale training exercise in Kaokoland. They unloaded tanks in Ondangwa and marched south towards Kamanjab, where they encountered challenging terrain that posed a threat to vehicles.

*“After a couple of kilometres on the hard gravel road, going at about 40 km/h, the bogey wheels of the tanks started to overheat. It was some sight to see an Olifant coming along with thick dark smoke from the sides, as if the exhaust system’s outlet was now on the side of the vehicle”.*

The group had to make several stops to fix their equipment before heading into the bush for two weeks to practice military tactics. They then returned to the road and were warned by Maj Du Toit to be cautious of enemy artillery. Du Toit was pleased with the training, and when they returned to Omuthiya, the training was less intense.

A little later Rossouw’s time was up, and he and his friends rattled out through Omuthiya’s main gate for the last time, having “liberated” (as he puts it) the wherewithal from the base kitchen for a farewell chicken braai the previous evening. He left with regret; by nature he was an operator, and had become so enmeshed in 61 Mech’s way of doing things that he had volunteered to stay on for another three months. But his request had been turned down, much to his disappointment. The big Olifants stayed behind, however, mute heralds of an escalation in the border conflict that loomed in the not-too-distant future.

# IMPORTANT

## ***61 Mech Veterans and Friends***

***The EXCO would like to keep you updated on our activities***

***Enable us to be able to do this***

**SEND THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO:  
MEMBERSHIP@61MECH.ORG.ZA**

Name

Contact number

Residential town

Dates served in 61 Meg

Email address



# THE GOOD COMMANDER

## Part 1

Roland de Vries

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE COMMANDER

*A commander must possess a variety of characteristics in order to be regarded a good one. However, there are certain essential qualities which he or she has to satisfy and which will be discussed below, namely: Professional competence; inner strength and faith; knowledge of human nature; maturity; thinking skills; enthusiasm; integrity*

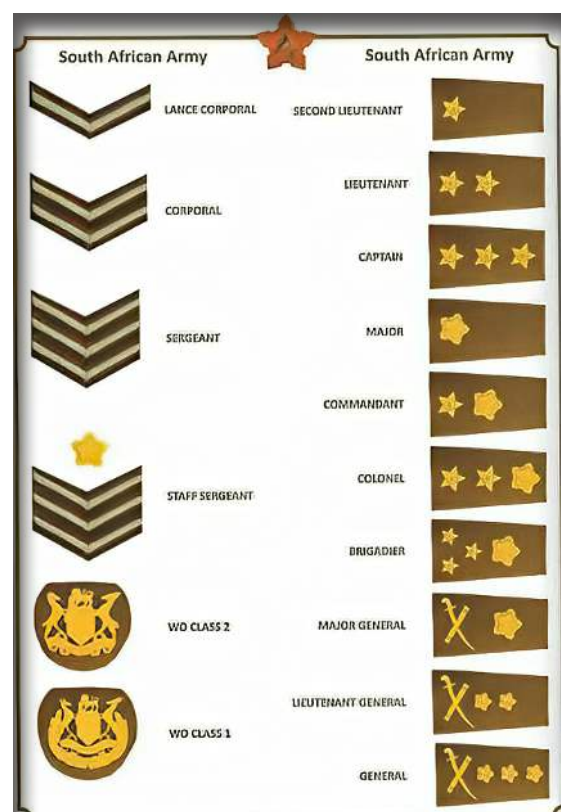
**Professional Competence.** The dynamic commander is a professional soldier resulting from his or her development through extensive experience, self-study, formal and informal training and confidence building amongst his or her subordinates. The commander is tactically and technically competent and equipped to be able to manage any battlefield situation. These imply skilful utilisation of terrain and integration of ability with the many divergent components of the modern battlefield. Professional competence instils confidence in own forces and evokes fear and confusion amongst the enemy.

**Inner Strength and Faith.** Inner strength and faith embrace the courage of conviction and resolution of faith. A commander will always experience opposition in his or her daily conduct – this resistance will not only originate from his or her enemy, but also from the people in his or her work environment. The counterpart to the latter is the courage of conviction to continue if you believe that you are right without worrying too much about the subsequent effects on yourself. Locus of control is seated in belief in self, faith, self-discipline, dedication and perseverance.

**Knowledge of Human Nature.** A first-rate commander not only has profound insight, but also an exceptional level of knowledge of human nature and human skills. He or she knows that this knowledge plays a decisive role in the

successful performance of tasks. The people who have been entrusted to one's leadership are one's greatest assets. The good commander therefore creates a positive climate of first-class interpersonal relations and open communication, which serve as a cornerstone for a stable and efficient organisation and sound morale. The psychological is to the physical as three is to one.

**Maturity.** The worthy commander is mature and has a good self-image. He or she functions on the basis of a clear self-knowledge and



knows that he or she is neither perfect nor infallible. There is awareness of the fact that one is just as dependent on one's subordinates as they are on you. A high level of maturity allows the commander to act in an emotionally stable, controlled and rational manner in all circumstances. He or she is not easily rattled or disrupted by crises or surprising turns.

**Thinking Skills.** It is the commander's task to conceptualise, think broadly and exhibit flexibility of thought. One of the primary functions is to make decisions based on sound judgment. For this all information required will not always be available and would require the making of decisions anyway. When justified errors are made in the process of reasoning, decision-making and courses of action, the commander must not trouble himself unnecessarily – the principle of 'no regrets and remorse afterwards' is applicable. He or she did their best; lessons were learnt. Continue with positivity, daring and confidence. The same norm applies to his or her underlings! A good commander therefore possesses a balance between will power and sound judgment. The motto furthermore must be not to get bogged down by unnecessary detail; 'first things, first'.

**Enthusiasm.** A first-rate commander operates primarily from a well-established source of inner strength. Therefore, he or she should have an exceptional passion for life. The result is that everything should be done with seal and enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is infectious, and the commander's combat force thus continually finds themselves in an inspiring climate of energy, positivity and enthusiasm.

**Integrity.** A good commander can possess all the previous characteristics, but if he does not have honesty and integrity, he will never gain the trust of his subordinates. The inspiration and confidence of people is essential to the military organisation, particularly under difficult and dangerous battle conditions. It is the moral dimension which usually keeps people and organisations afloat. The good commander handles promises made carefully, but is steadfast in keeping them.

## *The Role of the Commander*

The *raison d'être* for a military combat force is to conduct operations effectively, complete missions successfully and win battles. Any military organisation employs people, expertise, weaponry, equipment and other resources in an integrated manner to achieve missions – in accordance with 'ends, ways and means'.

Above all command excellence is required, without which purposeful action is impossible. The primary role of the commander is therefore to exercise his or her legal authority over the allocated forces in the execution of the mission.

A commander fulfils a variety of additional command functions in an endeavour to achieve objectives, especially with regards to: Personal expertise; conceptual thinking skills; human skills and communication skills. The most important of these roles the commander fulfils are the following:

**Inter-personal Role.** The interpersonal dimension derives directly from a commander's formal position of authority and it refers to inter-personal relations:

**The role of the nominal leader,** or figurehead, refers to the responsibility to represent his or her organisation at ceremonial, symbolic and social occasions.

**The leadership role** entails organisational inspiration, sensitivity, the handling of delegated powers, guidance and giving direction, as well as getting activities off the ground and coordinating them, in order to realise the mission or objective.

**The liaison role** refers to dealing with others, apart from seniors or subordinates, for example, with representatives of other forces or arms of the service, stake holders and interest groups.

**The Role in Providing Information.** Successful commanders build formal and informal networks through which they share information



with others. In this regards, the commander acts as the nerve-centre of an organisation and is an important source of information. Many of the meaningful contacts he or she builds up in this way provide him or her with extensive sources of information and knowledge. The monitoring, dissemination and spokesman roles of a commander is shown below, and describes the information-giving aspects of this:

***The monitoring role*** entails receiving, investigating and analysing the environment for information, which is important to the organisation.

***The dissemination role*** refers to the sharing and dissemination of factual information to subordinates and other relevant organisations. Often information is disseminated conditionally to others – conditionally, since they must have access to the information, or because the information is sensitive and it is regarded as priority information.

***The role as spokesman*** of the organisation not only means the distribution of information inside the organisation, but also to others outside the organisation and in conducting interviews with others.

***The Decision-making Role.*** Commanders require information to make intelligent decisions, determine courses of action and establish the *raison d'être* of their organisations. Herein he or she plays a central role in the decision-making process and inner workings of organisations.

***The entrepreneurial role*** entails designing and undertaking planned change to make a meaningful contribution, take the initiative and render support. Commanders as entrepreneurs are designers and originators of change.

***The role of the trouble-shooter*** is conducted when a commander has to deal with a situation outside his immediate control. Examples are rebellious behaviour at one or other unit or the infringement of an agreement by an involved party. Crunches may occur when a weak commander allows a problem situation to deteriorate into a

crisis. Even competent commanders cannot always foresee all problem situations in time and when crises arise, he or she must settle the matter in the interest of the organisation. This entails judicious and objective actions undertaken many a time either strongly or with empathy.

***The allocation of resources role*** entails the selection of options regarding the allocation of funds, equipment, personnel, occupying the commander's time, as well as its structuring.

***The negotiator's role*** is the process of meeting and discussing differences and disputes existing between individuals or groups, with the aim of reaching agreements. Negotiations and mediation are particularly difficult when dealing with others who do not have the same objectives as the organisation.

*High morale and esprit de corps and the consistency of high levels of discipline and first-rate standards of efficiency are indicators of effective military leadership in any organisation. These disciplines are inter-dependent and can be used as a barometer during evaluation to determine levels of leadership and combat readiness.*



# MILITARY VETERANS PENSION

Defence and Military Veterans Minister Angie Motshekga has budgeted R158 million for the rollout of military veterans' pension benefits as part of the department's commitment to former soldiers.

Speaking during her first defence and military veterans budget vote in Parliament on Monday 15 July, Motshekga took a moment to recognise and honour the military veterans community, "some of whom have paid the supreme sacrifice in the service of our country."

She explained the Department of Military Veterans (DMV) budget allocation for the 2024/2025 financial year amounts to R864 million, and this includes R158 million for the rollout of pension benefits.

"The DMV is working to improve on the administration in the payment of the military veterans pension benefit and is working with the Government Pensions Administration Agency (GPAA). Over 18 000 applications that are currently under consideration have been received by GPAA since the start of the implementation of this benefit. GPAA is seized with the verification and processing thereof," Motshekga told Parliament.

Other big items in the DMV budget include R140 million for the compensation of employees; R142 million for administration; and R446 million for the Socio-Economic Branch, which comprises housing, healthcare, wellness and compensation for injuries. The Empowerment and Stakeholder Management branch has been allocated R276 million, which includes education, burial support, skills development, memorialisation, honours and heritage.

One of the challenges facing the DMV is the verification and database for military veterans. As this is "the gateway into the DMV and deli-

very of benefits, the DMV will be working with the State Information Technology Agency (SITA) to ensure that robust ICT infrastructure is implemented. This will ensure that military veterans are verified and thus enabled to have access to their benefits," Motshekga said.

In terms of tangible benefits, the DMV has pledged to deliver 750 houses to military veterans over the three-year Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) period including those struggling to settle their mortgage bonds. "This would be in addition to those that have received housing since the inception of the Department, of which 1095 houses have been handed over to deserving military veterans," Motshekga said.

Part of the R446 million in socio-economic support for veterans goes towards subsidised healthcare services, "and ensures that 18 650 military veterans have access. 17 691 were provided with health care to date since the sixth administration," the defence and military veterans minister explained.

"For the Compensation Benefit, in the 2023/24 financial year, the DMV attended to all backlog applications for the benefit. More than 200 military veterans have attended medical assessments."

In relation to the education support provided to military veterans and their dependents, the DMV plans to increase such support to six hundred beneficiaries in the next financial year. "Thus far, more than 600 beneficiaries have graduated from tertiary institutions in various academic fields ranging from medicine; engineering; accounting; to mention but a few."



# *In Memorium*

## **BEGRAFNIS (5 JULIE) EN HERDENKINGSDIENS (13 JULIE)**

*Barries Barnard*

*Rienie Le Roux Dickinson*

*Liewe Barries*

*Vandag word jou aardse liggaam neergelê en die gedagte daaraan maak nog nie sin in ons gedagtes nie. Wat jy nagelaat het is te veel om op te noem - en ek ken maar 'n klein deeltjie daarvan. As ek lees van jou invloed in die bokswêreld en die weermag en oral waar jy mense se lewens aangeraak het en ek dink aan ons as skoolpelle dan weet ek jy het 'n ryk en geseënde lewe gehad.*

*Zenobia, is sekerlik die enigste een wat 'n idee het van jou invloed. Jy het die wonderlikste vrou wat op haar eie stil manier oral ingepas het EN bereid was om jou te deel met almal wat vir jou saak gemaak het.*

*Barries, hoe gaan ek weer 'n reünie reël met die wete jy gaan nie weer daar wees nie? (Ons sal 'n whiskey op jou lewe drink as ons weer kuier).*

*Ek dink aan ons geselsies en lekker kuier saam met jou, jou oor wat werklik geluister het en die wyse raad wat jy gegee het - en ek besef hoe gebalanseerd jy werklik was.*

*Die sprekende voorbeeld van “klein botteltjies met 'n gekonsentreerde inhoud”*

*Barries!*

*Tot weer siens, ons vriend.*





# Herdenkingsdiens

Van

## *Barries Barnard*

*Datum: 13 Jul 2024    Tyd: 11:00*

*Plek: Gedenknaald, Vrouemonument, Bloemfontein*

*Drag: Militêre Veterane drag of semi-formeel*

*Naurae: Tommy Lessing 072 790 3005 | Reg Walkerley 082 420 7997*





### **Andrew Whitaker**

Calla Fourie, a giant of a man. At a guess 2m tall. Played Craven week rugby, before reporting for duty at 1 SAI in January 1979. Section leaders course followed and he took part in Operation Sceptic as a Lance Corporal. He then studied Law and was promoted to the rank of Major, where during his camps he found himself as a court martial judge. He became a magistrate and served predominantly in the Eastern Cape. He passed away after suffering a heart attack at home in Elliott on 16 July 2024. May he Rest in Peace

